

SCREE



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA BOX 2037 ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510
JUNE 1974 VOL. 17, No. 6

JUNE MEETING....Wednesday, June 19....Pioneer Schoolhouse...3rd & Eagle...(upstairs),
8:00 PM...Mini-Show "Solo".....Maxi-Show "Americans on Everest".

CLIMBING SCHEDULE

JUNE 15 MATANUSKA PEAK, Leader needed. Meet at Valu-Mart parking lot at 8:00 AM.
This is a long climb and may require as much as 24 hours to complete.

JUNE 22-23 FLAT TOP SLEEP-IN

JUNE 30 (SUNDAY) TIKISHLA-KOKTOYA, Leader needed. Meet 8:00 AM Valu-Mart.

JULY 13-14 WILLIWAU PEAK, Leader needed. Camp somewhere near base of peak in
Williwaw Lakes Valley Saturday night. Climb peak Sunday and return.

HIKING SCHEDULE

SATURDAY JUNE 15 PTARMIGAN VALLEY - Leaders Dave and Carol DeVoe. Meet in
Safeway Parking Lot, MOUNTAIN VIEW, at 9:00 am.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY JUNE 22-23 FLAT TOP SLEEP IN - Host Bill Barnes Jr. Arrive any
time from 6:00 pm on Saturday. Bring two logs for fire.

SATURDAY SUNDAY JUNE 29-30 EMERALD LAKE, Leader Rod Wilson. Meet Valu-Mart 7:00 AM.

THURSDAY, FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY JULY 4-7, CROW PASS-CAMP CREEK-BIRD CREEK
Backpacking trip. Leaders Bill Stivers, Bill Barnes Sr. Meet Valu-Mart 6:00 am.

SATURDAY SUNDAY, JULY 13-14 CRAIGIE CREEK (HATCHER PASS), Leader Marie Lundstrom.
Meet Valu-Mart 8:00 am.

FRIDAY JULY 19 THROUGH SUNDAY JULY 28, CHILKOOT TRAIL, Leader Dona Agosti. Depart
Valu-Mart 6:00 am. However, all transportation must be arranged ahead of time and
equipment checked out two weeks in advance. Call Dona Agosti, 279-2901 for check-
out or questions.

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING, MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA, May 15, 1974, Pioneer
School House, 3rd & Eagle, Anchorage, Ak. 8:00 PM

Meeting called to order by President Bill Barnes Jr. Minutes of last meeting as
they appeared in May SCREE were approved. Treasurer's report showed Savings 354.00,
Checking 415.49 and Cash 31.87 for total of 801.84. Expenses of \$213.29 included
\$100 for postage and \$30.00 to Alaska Center for the Environment.
John Pinamont announced climbing schedules for June. Dona Agosti reported on several
previous hikes and announced May-June schedule. Members were reminded of Flat Top
Sleep-in June 23-24 and July picnic at Goose Lake in lieu of business meeting.

(Minutes continu d)

Tom Meacham, Conservation Chairman, reported that the Hatcher Pass bill passed the Senate but not the House and it was hoped there would be better results next year. He also reported that he had written to the Land Use Planning Commission with copies to BLM and others regarding easements to be set forth in the Department of Interior deed to the Eklutna Native Assn. of Eklutna area lands. Those noted were an easement from end of Eklutna Road to MCA's Eklutna cabin, the old road to East Twin Pass, the road to Bold Peak Valley, trails along South Fork Eklutna, access routes to Bashful, Balafal Peaks and Stiver's Gully, access to Goat Rock, West Twin Peak, and from Thunderbird Falls to Mt. Eklutna; also access to Round Top through Ptarmigan Valley. Official correspondence is on file with MCA secretary.

No reports from Huts & Cabin or Geographic Names committees. Gil Todd announced that Alaska Rescue Group would hold four evening sessions on Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 10:00. Negotiations under way to use fire tower behind city police station.

President Barnes announced that a new SCREE editor was needed. Several new members asked questions regarding the club and President Barnes explained that we are a climbing and hiking club, that we involve our club with environmental issues, that we maintain a series of huts and cabins and have equipment for rental at a nominal fee; also that training schools are held at various times during the year.

John Pinamont showed some very awesome slides of his group's winter ascent of Blackburn. Meeting adjourned. Respectfully submitted, Dona Agosti

BIRD CREEK RIDGE HIKE

April 21, 1974

Terry & Joyce Muehlenbach

A group of 23 hikers consisting of an assortment of youngsters, oldsters and a dog or two met in the Valu Mart parking lot at 8:30 Sunday morning eager to climb Bird Creek Ridge. The day was clear with the crisp morning air yielding to the sun's rays. Upon arrival at Bird Creek parking area, we spotted Mike, Sally and Mikey Richardson already part way up on the well-beaten trail. Soon our assemblage could be seen strung out along the hillside. The dogs were the most tireless climbers, running back and forth, up and down, while the rest of us took frequent stops on the steep ridge. The trail was dry and vegetation varied. Not much snow was encountered until the higher levels were reached, where it was welcomed as cool refreshment as well as making climbing easier. The majority eventually made the 3505' summit where the view of the Arm and the Chugach mountains was magnificent. After lunch, kite flying, and basking in the sun, we began the fun-filled descent by running and "seat-glissading" down the snow-covered ridge. Once down, each went his own way reflective of the beauty and camaraderie of the day.

GLACIER STAMPEDE

April 22, 1974

Bjarne Hala

The annual Carnwell Glacier Stampede was held April 20 and 21. The stampede is an annual event sponsored by the Alaska Alpine Club out of Fairbanks. One hundred and thirty-five people signed up Saturday morning to ski up and establish a tent city around the lower Carnwell hut in the Eastern Alaska Range. The event was held in beautiful, sunny weather with temperatures at or just a few degrees below freezing. The stampede is scheduled to coincide with All Campus Day at the Fairbanks campus of the University of Alaska. This allows organizers from the university and people who want to do some climbing during the event to make it a three-day weekend. Institute Peak, a spectacular 8000 foot peak just across from the hut was successfully climbed by one or more groups. Climbers and

organizers, the total number of people spending Saturday night by the glacier totaled 150 people. Two dog sled teams with supplies also made the trip.

The event allowed people to get a first hand look at some of the latest camping and climbing equipment. Fifty-eight tents were counted in addition to snow caves, make-shift shelters out of snow blocks and space blankets, and one igloo. This year a 50-cent charge was made which went to Alaska Alpine Club who in turn marked the trail with bamboo wands and made sure that everyone made it safely up and down the glacier.

PERIL PEAK, 7040'

May 26, 1974

John Pinamont

Like many trips, this climb was spawned at a party at McHugh Creek the night before. Agreeing to leave later that morning at 8:00 AM, we headed home to pack and recuperate. Leaving town at 2:00 PM, we mellowed out on the drive up to Eklutna Glacier. Shouldering our munchie-laden packs, we set out for Pickler's Perch under cloudless blue skies. As we moped up the first icefall, the valley walls reverberated with the boom of thunder, and monstrous raindrops fell from the once cloudless sky drenching us to the bone. We finally reached the cabin and shortly thereafter the rain ceased.

We dried our soaked clothing the next morning under the intensely hot sun and headed south toward Peril Peak by 10:30. As we approached the East Face, a constant torrent of avalanches kept us apprehensive. We realized it would be necessary to climb the rock faces between the snow-filled couloirs instead of the easy avenue usually afforded by the couloirs.

We arrived at a likely-looking place from which to climb to the south ridge just as a snow squall pelted us. We quickly changed from cut-offs and tee shirts to wool pants and windbreakers. After the passing of the squall, we ascended a short snow cone to a rock ledge. Moments later, an avalanche of wet snow slithered down our ascent path.

We third-classed up the exposed rock amid varying degrees of protest and occasional cries of anguish until we reached a point at which roped climbing was deemed necessary. One pitch of low fifth class rock led to easier scrambling until we reached a chimney. Because of the high possibility of the rope knocking down rocks on the climbers below, Jeff tied off a rope and the others climbed using a Jumar as a safety. Above the chimney a half hour of scrambling brought us on to the south ridge. We trucked along a quarter mile of ridge until we came to one of those elements that comprise a thrilling climb - a 100-foot knife edge. Stradling the knife edge, we leap frogged across, taking pictures and dropping loose rocks down the face. The ridge terminated in a wall requiring another roped pitch, this time of middle fifth difficulty, ably led by Jeff. Once again, we used the Jumar safety method, allowing the five following climbers to ascend the pitch expediently. After some more scrambling, the summit was attained. The register was found and indicated three prior ascents had been made - one in 1964, one in 1966 and one in 1968. By way of historical record, the members of our ascent were Ed Coleman, Scott Mueller, John "the Czech" Mucha, Vaughn "the Nazi" Hoeffler, Jeff Bennett, alias Jacques Benet, and an over-the-hill mountaineer John "the Tyrolean Terror" Pinamont. We participated in the usual summit games of snapping hero shots, rolling rocks, scarfing munchies and so forth; additionally Ed, for some obscure reason, engaged in the task of looking for hobbits. Finding same fruitless, we had no alternative but to descend. After some vacillation on route choice, I finally pointed west and we all headed down the west ridge. The route was somewhat sneaky, but eventually a rappel brought us to a transverse

snow couloir, which we swam down to the west branch of the Eklutna glacier. By now it was as dark as it would get, but still light enough to travel. We slogged several miles down the glacier to the fork, and then traversed along the fringe of an icefall towards the hut. Under the nocturnal lighting, we were unable to distinguish the location of crevasses, so the anxiety of the party was high. The leader moved a step at a time, probing with his ice ax ahead of him. Despite such precautions, the next to last person, Vaughn, plunged through a hidden crevasse to his armpits. We stumbled into the hut around 1:00 a.m., scarfed on dinner, and crashed out. The next day was spent sunning ourselves, listening to cassettes, and wiping out our munchie supply. In the cool of the evening, a rapid descent of the glacier was made, arriving at the truck in slightly more than an hour. The tedious drive back to Anchorage was highlighted by the traditional stop at the Dari-DeLite for ice cream.

HICKS CREEK - CARIBOU CREEK May 25, 26, 27, 1974 LDR. - JERRY GOTTSBUET
 Total Mileage - 35
 Game sighted - Moose, Bear, Sheep, Beavers,
 Muskrats, Ducks, Ptarmigan, 101 rabbits

Every so often a backpacker completes a trip that stands out above all previous experiences. The reasons for its uniqueness may be varied - beautiful weather, unusual scenery and game sightings, spirited camaraderie among fellow hikers, or difficult challenges met and conquered. Rarely does one find all of these reasons in one hike. It is easy now to understand why this area of the Talkeetnas has been a favorite of prospectors and hunters for many years. Our group of nine ranging in age from Junior High to ancient, plus one dog, left Mile 99 on the Glenn Highway at 10:30 am. The first day's hiking took us across boggy tundra, over a pass, on to a scenic plateau, then down to Hicks Creek which was raging with muddy spring run-off. The full extent of its rage was encountered when the group crossed it three times. Leader Jerry got double action because DOG had to be carried across. We arrived at Hicks Lake late in the day, and because walking was wet and difficult, set up camp about a mile beyond the lake near Divide Creek. Prospectors on horseback earlier in the day had warned us about grizzlies and black bears on Hicks Creek and huge paw prints verified their observations. Dona Agosti was in charge of whistle blowing. Fast time was made next day because we were able to walk on the crusted snow to Caribou Creek. Here we followed a horse trail southeast along the ridge above Caribou Creek, then when we noted that there was still much thick ice along the edges of Caribou, descended and followed this easy route for almost three miles. At a point where Caribou Creek entered a narrow gorge, we ascended to about the 2500-2700 foot level and stayed at that altitude for the remainder of the day. Although game trails were occasionally encountered, much of this day's walking was across tiring, soft, wet alpine tundra. Camp that night was on a high point in a ravine which gave us a three-dimensional view of the back of Sheep Mountain Range, Syncline Mountain and behind us Fortress Ridge, and a clear-water stream thrown in for good measure. Jerry and three of the young men scouted the next ridge that evening and encountered a grizzly, who luckily, was not hungry. (The next day we encountered a Dall Sheep right on the trail). Our third day's challenges included climbing to about the 3000 foot level, then descending almost 500 feet into the Fortress Creek Gorge. To our surprise, we found the river iced over except for a five-foot channel. There were jelly legs and acid stomachs, but all of the

party jumped the undercut channel, then began the perpendicular ascent up a game trail out of the canyon. Dan Creek was still sufficiently ice-covered to give us another hiking reprieve. From there, only wet bogs, several ridges and one beaver-dam crossing were encountered. We exited along a lake in Section 23 and out at Mile 101. Although BLM records show this route to be public access, we have heard that the homesteader with locked gate has other ideas. Therefore, an alternative would be to cross Dan Creek about a third of a mile above its confluence with Caribou Creek and follow a tractor trail through Section 19 at about the 2700 foot level, thence to the section line and over a small lake in the upper right portion of Section 30; thence out to Glenn Highway at Mile 104. There is a gravel pit across the highway which is handy for parking cars. BLM officials state that although this is patented land, this access tractor trail preceded entry and is open to the public. Our exit was without incident, unless you classify the noisy celebration bash at King Mountain Inn an incident. I know my fellow hikers join me in thanking Jerry for his extremely capable leadership. If he hadn't read maps so well, we'd still be there. Dona Agosti for fellow hikers Raj Bhargava, Jim Evans, Dan and Shawn Oxford, Twain Tipton, Jim Renkert and Richard Ulrich.

ICEFALL PEAK

Spring Break 1974

Bjarne Holm

(This climb is a first ascent by this route. One Japanese group and a group led by Ben West have attempted this route, but were turned back by huge, 50-foot wide crevasses extending from one side of the valley to the other, and because of too little time available)

Roman Motyka, Larry Reynolds and I climbed Icefall Peak from the Gakona Glacier side during spring break 1974. Logistically, we were helped by Jim Foderaro and his dogsled team and by Cheryl Haines who helped with the dogs. Our group started up the Carwell Glacier on March 22. We made only two and a half miles that first day because of the deep, soft snow which covered the terminal moraines. The narrow runners on the sled made progress frustratingly slow. The going was only slightly better the second morning. By noon we reached the more flat medial moraine and the pace picked up dramatically. Camp was established below the lower Carwell hut. The next day our group made it to the planned campsite at 5600 feet on the glacier where we felt that we would be close enough to both Snow White (9000+ ft) and Icefall Peak (8000+ ft) to allow day climbs of both. The fourth day came with perfect weather. Larry, Roman and I started out for the summit of Snow White, following the large glacier flowing off the southeastern wall of the mountain. We planned to reach the 8000 ft saddle just to the east of the summit and follow the ridge from there to the top. Not a breeze was blowing and the intense sun baked down on us. We left our skis as we came to the saddle and started to crampon up the last 1000 ft but time was running short. By 5 PM we still had the last and most difficult 300 ft of the climb remaining. Since it would mean bivouacking to complete the ascent we decided against it and skied back to camp.

The following day we moved camp closer to Icefall Peak on the glacier divide between the Carwell and Gakona Glaciers. The snow was hard under only a few inches of powder, just right for the dogs, and none of the skiers could keep up with them. We set up camp early enough that day to ski up towards Icefall Peak and scout a route.

Sunny weather greeted us the sixth day but we recorded our lowest temperature, -4 degrees F, that morning. Jim, Cheryl and the dogs took off down the glacier, heading back towards Fairbanks, while Roman, Larry and I retraced our tracks from the day before towards Icefall Peak. It took two hours to ski up to 7500 ft.

From there a 500 ft slope, averaging 50 degrees, led up to the summit, and the snow conditions were ideal. Our boots sank a foot into the snow along the lower two-thirds of the slope. The snow on the upper third was harder, but with some step kicking we reached the sharp, corniced ridge between the two 8000+ ft peaks. The summit was only eight feet above us, up a vertical wall formed by the summit cornice. Roman anchored himself with an ice screw and, with a belay from us, started chopping away at the cornice. By 1 pm all three of us had passed through a narrow slot in the cornice and sat on the summit. The view was spectacular. A continuous cloud cover at 6000 feet made us feel as if we were on a peak twice as high. The clouds were rising so we hastily climbed down to our skis and returned to camp. A white-out engulfed us and the next day the fog was so thick that we hardly bothered to go outside our tents. The eighth day the clouds started to break a little so we skied down the Gakona Glacier to get some exercise. Going was slow in the foot and a half of new powder which had just fallen. The weather wasn't much better the next day so we skied the fifteen miles back to the highway and drove back to Fairbanks.

I would like to thank the members who worked the hardest of all during the trip: Ace, Pedro, Tulie, Bumble, Bobby, Cab, Naki and Naki Bitch, the eight dogs who hauled most of our gear up the glacier. Bjarne Holm

BENCH LAKE June 8-9, 1974 Leader & Bill Stivers
 (One way 10 miles) Dona Agosti

Those who knew this route in the old days will be surprised to see the new, improved Forest Service Trail. In the past, it was necessary to negotiate seven or eight sometimes treacherous stream crossings (such as Ground Hog Creek and Upper Bench Lake cable crossing). Now, a four-foot trail and avalanche-proof bridges make this a moderately easy one-day trek. However, the trail is still soggy and rough in parts. The A-frame Forest Service cabin sits in an idyllic location at the south end of the lake. (We have seen a request for bid on the section of the trail from Moose Pass to Bench Lake).

Seventeen of us departed from the parking lot at Mile 64 Seward Highway at 8:30 AM and lunched at Upper Bench Creek Bridge. The day had been clouded over, but the sun came out to preside over seventeen prone bodies at siesta time. Bench Creek drops sharply just above this crossing, so we climbed several hundred feet to a scenic bench. Another few miles and the lake was in view. This is a wide, scenic valley and worth the effort to get there. Some of our party used the cabin, others preferred tenting on the soft tundra. The young men preferred fishing from the boat, and several grayling were caught and sampled. After the usual 5:00 PM Agosti-Stivers refreshments, and not content with only 10 miles of hiking, Ann Jones, Jon and Tim Agosti, Jim Evans, Seant Sinnett, Bill Stivers and Twain Tipton climbed the 2000 foot ridge to the west of camp. They reported a good view of Johnson Lake from there. Temperatures hit the frost line during the night, but by 5:15 am the hot sun had dissipated the white stuff and hikers were on the return trail by 8:30 am. Lunch at Ground Hog Creek with its spectacular view of a falls was noteworthy. All hikers were out by 5:00 PM. Others in addition to the climbers noted above were Bill Barnes Sr., Betty and Tony Bockstahler, Louis Bassler, Mary Ann Bartholomew, Donna Evans, Kathy Parkas, Dick Ulrich and Tom Agosti. Great crowd, great weather, great hike.

REQUIEM FOR A BUSH PILOT

Herb Christie (1923 - 1974)

1 8006

An air crash near the Matanuska Glacier on May 24, 1974 took the life of a bush pilot whose skill and dependability had enabled several Mountaineering Club members to explore the otherwise inaccessible peaks of the northcentral Chugach, and to undertake several significant climbs in the area. Herb and his passenger were scouting for bear hunting camps at the time. The passenger survived the crash, and was able to reach safety at Glacier Park Lodge.

Herb will be remembered for his individuality, a characteristic in keeping with most Alaskan bush pilots -- his "down East" New Hampshire accent, which brought back memories of childhood or college days to some of his passengers; his lean, angular frame jackknifing into the cockpit of his aircraft; his L. L. Bean woodsman's hat. He is also remembered for the pride he had in his equipment (especially his homemade airplane skis), his prompt arrival for pickup at a time set days before, his nagging worry that some fool tourist in a Winnebago would drive across the Glacier Park strip during a landing or takeoff roll, his knowledge of every flat spot in the region big enough to park a Cub. But some of his MCA passengers remember Herb best for his somewhat bemused attitude toward climbers. He wasn't really certain what motivated mountain climbers, but perhaps felt that it was something that gets into your blood, like flying, for instance. Now hunters, that was a breed he could understand -- they brought back with them what they went after, and if they didn't, they were disappointed. But climbers, something else seemed to propel them....

The union between bush flying and mountain climbing is much closer in Alaska than anywhere else, a fact of our sport which makes it unique to the mountaineering experience. Out of sheer necessity, the Alaskan climber places his fate in the hands of his pilot, briefly permitting a non-climber to make vital judgments in the mountains which affect his safety and that of his party. All factors of terrain, weather, and wind are weighed by an outsider, and the climber has scant basis to quarrel with the decisions made. Several MCA members can recall climbs in which the hazards of flying in and flying out were, in retrospect, greater than the dangers faced on the climb itself. The hazards always existed, but they remained speculative, and were later obscured by more pleasant memories of the climb. However, the speculative perils of flying in remote, rugged country in pursuit of recreation have an unsettling habit of becoming very real from time to time.

Herb Christie will be missed.